

ABC WORLD NEWS TONIGHT
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The CIA and the Media

JENNINGS: The CIA Director, William Casey, has been causing a lot of controversy lately by attacking the news media for publishing classified information which has been leaked by government officials. Mr. Casey has threatened to prosecute. And today he sat down to explain his position.

In Washington, ABC's John McWethy.

JOHN McWETHY: In a rare television appearance, CIA Director William Casey made a broad defense of his threats to prosecute news organizations that broadcast or print classified information.

Appearing on "John McLaughlin: One on One," to be aired Sunday, Casey explained:

CIA DIRECTOR WILLIAM CASEY: The reason we've taken this position now is that there has been a perfect hemorrhage of these things. There's been a complete flood of leaks. It's reached the point where we're

very seriously concerned about the impact on our basic capabilities.

McWETHY: Casey, who said he loved the press, denied that the White House had asked him in recent days to call off his attacks.

DIRECTOR CASEY: That's a false story, entirely false. Nobody's called me off. Nobody has tried to call me off.

McWETHY: Commenting on the conviction yesterday of Ronald Pelton on four counts of espionage for selling secrets to the Russians, Casey said until a Russian defector told the CIA there was a mole in the National Security Agency, the U. S. had no idea.

DIRECTOR CASEY: And even then we didn't know who he was. It took us quite a while to identify exactly who he was.

McWETHY: Casey said the CIA and FBI caught eight or nine spies last year, more than any previous twelve month period. And despite leaks to the news media that Casey said seriously threatened the CIA's capability, he claimed the agency is stronger now than it has ever been.

John McWethy, ABC News, Washington.